3: Hiscocks G-4, 5 (1946-1949) 1953 EK1 Austria EK1

tion centres, people's libraries, folk-song and folk-dancing clubs and art societies. The example was soon followed in a number of other provinces.

An important part in the adult education movement was played by the so-called people's libraries, from which books could normally be borrowed without charge. Some were run by the villages and municipalities, some by the churches, some by trade unions, and others by political parties or voluntary associations. Their number rose within two years from a low level of 400 in 1945 to 1,257 in 1947.

The lack of books was one of the main cultural problems in post-War Austria. The intellectual isolation and severely restricted literary diet of the Nazi régime were followed by a period of dangerous uncertainty after Hitler's power had collapsed. A great deal would depend on how the mental and spiritual void was filled which had been left by the failure and exposure of the whole Nazi system.

Austrian journalism rose bravely to the occasion, but in the early days Austria's own contribution to the solution of the problem was limited by economic dislocation, shortage of paper, and absence of the conditions conducive to creative effort. The Allied Information Services did a great deal, and two British organizations took the lead in remedying the lack of books. By an imaginative stroke Mr. Ernest Bevin gave orders for two aeroplane loads of English books to be flown over to Austria early in 1946. This enabled the British Council to hold a highly successful book exhibition in Vienna during March, as a result of which nearly all the 20,000 books were sold within a short time and a large number of additional orders were received by London publishers. The British Foreign Office and Treasury made arrangements by which the Austrians could buy the books with their own currency and the British publishers were paid in sterling. Henceforth the main restriction on the supply of English books in Austria was the limited numbers available in Britain itself, where the paper shortage was still acute. The following year the British Council organized six further book exhibitions in provincial

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214 648 centres, and thus extended to the whole country the opportunities already given to the capital. The British Information Services also made arrangements to print in Austria special cheap editions of a selected number of English books. As a result of these various efforts Austrians were given access to the Western ideas from which they had been cut off for more than seven years and were able to acquire some of the most modern medical and scientific text-books. The process of restoring normal intellectual contacts was carried one stage farther by gifts from the United States, Britain, and France to Austrian university libraries.

214 As conditions gradually improved, Austria's own book production revived, until in 1952, judged by the number of new works published, she had become one of the world's half-dozen leading book producers. For some years the revival was held back by a ban on the sale of books and periodicals between Austria and Western Germany, which greatly limited the potential market for books written in German, but this obstacle was finally overcome, and in 1952 representatives of the Austrian and West German book trade made arrangements to hold exhibitions in each other's territory.

517 The position of music, the theatre, and the arts in Austria is difficult for anyone to understand who has not lived in a country with a past tradition of lavish royal patronage. For the Austrian Republic has inherited the sense of responsibility towards the arts in the widest sense, which was first shown by the most enlightened and discriminating of the Habsburgs and maintained as part of the Imperial dignity by other members of the family.

545 The origins of the State Opera and the Burgtheater go back to the first half of the seventeenth century, when the earliest music dramas were performed in the Hofburg, and to the year 1776, when the Emperor Joseph II decreed that the theatre next to the Hofburg should become the 'German National Theatre'. During the second half of the nineteenth century the two institutions were given the magnificent new homes on the Ring which are still amongst the most impressive of